

# “Condensation-Expansion” and “AB Double Texts” Based on PAD Class Teaching Model and Practices—The Case of English Writing

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**Abstract:** Addressing the major problems in current English Writing course in China, the study puts forward “condensation-expansion” and “AB double Texts” based on PAD Class Teaching Model, which revolutionized the traditional English writing teaching. The study decodes model essays by splitting, locating keywords and abstracting; and encodes the writing by brainstorming, lexical clustering and extended writing after analyzing the title and directions. Text A is used to demonstrate by teachers and Text B is used to practice by learners. The teaching practices from 2019 till now show that the “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class teaching model can effectively improve the learners’ writing ability, cultivate learners’ critical thinking, expressive and cooperative ability.

**Keywords:** Condensation-expansion, AB Double Texts, PAD Class, English Writing

## 1. Introduction

To address major problems in current university classroom teaching in China, Xuexin Zhang proposed PAD(Presentation-Assimilation-Discussion) Class as a new teaching method combining the advantages of lecture and discussion in 2014[1]. The key idea of PAD Class is to allocate half of the class time to teacher’s presentation and the other half to learners’ discussion. The presentation and discussion are separated so that learners can have certain time for self-paced and individualized assimilation[2]. That is, this mode of teaching is a combination of lecture and discussion[3]. And it improved the teaching effect by stimulating learners[4]. Results from pilot testing indicate that PAD Class enhanced learners’ active learning, unleashed learners’ autonomy, cultivated learners’ team collaboration and expressive abilities, reducing teachers’ teaching burden and facilitating teachers’ scientific research. In this way, teaching quality and efficiency has been improved greatly. Therefore, PAD Class has gained popularity all over the country after it was proposed and is known as the only burgeoning teaching model which is original and native in China[5].

In 2018, based on principles of brain science, Xuexin Zhang proposed a new-type teaching model of Chinese: “condensation-expansion” and “AB double texts”. Integrating PAD Class and Chinese teaching, “condensation-expansion” and “AB double texts” provides a systematical overall solution. It is a historic breakthrough which resolved two major problems in the 100-year Chinese teaching: how to teach reading and how to teach writing. Inspired by the idea of condensation-expansion and AB double texts, the study took the lead in applying this method to the practices of college English teaching. As a result, a mature and practical model has been explored in English writing, English reading and English translation after a 4-year testing. Meanwhile, all the practices have achieved satisfactory results. As the first practitioner who applied “condensation-expansion” and “AB double texts” model to English teaching, the study proved the general applicability of this model in language teaching.

English Writing is a core course for non-English majors, which covers the basics of English writing, writing skills, practical writing and differences between English and Chinese[6]. However, the interaction between teacher and learners, and between learners is not adequate due to the lack of class hour in the traditional teaching model. And the textbooks on English writing attach importance to language but ignore the writing skills universally. In order to promote the interaction between teacher and learners, and between learners and improve learners’ writing skills, “condensation-expansion” and “AB double texts” based on PAD Class is adopted.

The study focused on the “condensation-expansion” and “AB double texts” based on PAD Class

teaching model design, implementation and effect evaluation in English Writing, explores the practical application of the model to other skills in language teaching.

## 2. PAD Class Teaching Model of English Writing Based on “Condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts”

PAD Class divides the teaching process into three parts: Presentation, Assimilation and Discussion [7]. Teachers allocate half of the class time to learners’ discussion and the other half to teacher’s presentation. The presentation and discussion are separated so that learners can have certain time for self-paced and individualized assimilation. The process is shown in Figure 1.

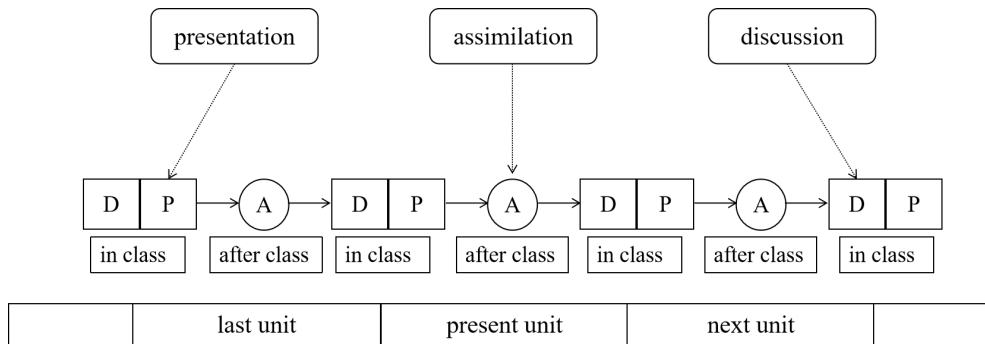


Figure 1: Teaching process of PAD Class [5]

Integrating the teaching process of PAD Class (presentation, assimilation and discussion) with the “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts”, the study puts forward the “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class Teaching Model, which revolutionized the traditional English writing teaching. During the first presentation, teachers use the first Text A as material to demonstrate the process of condensation. And teachers assign the first Text B to learners to decode during assimilation. Then during discussion, learners discuss in groups in class under the guidance of teachers and teachers answers the questions raised by learners. During the second presentation, teachers use the second Text A as material to demonstrate the process of expansion. And during the second assimilation, teachers assign a writing assignment, with the second Text B as reference. Finally, during the second discussion learners discuss in class. The process is shown in Figure 2.

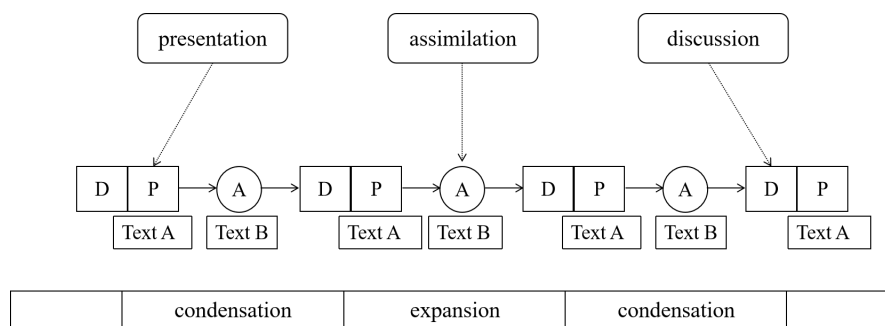


Figure 2: Teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class

The teaching process integrates PAD class into English writing, putting forward the teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts”. Therefore, the learners’ writing skills, expressive and cooperative abilities are all improved, which makes learners meet the needs and requirements of the society.

### 2.1 Condensation

Condensation mainly consists of three steps: splitting, locating keywords and abstracting. The condensation process is the process of decoding.

#### 2.1.1 Splitting

The first step of condensation is splitting the model essay. It is also the easiest step, which mainly

involves paragraphs and sentences. The splitting of paragraphs is based on the arrangement of paragraphs. If a model essay consists of three paragraphs, the essay is to be split into three paragraphs. And the splitting of sentences is based on the punctuation at the end of each sentence, for example, full stop or question mark.

### **2.1.2 Locating Keywords**

After the model essay is split into sentences, keywords are located in each sentence. The keywords are mainly content words, which reveal the meaning of the sentence. And in terms of the quantity of keywords, it depends on the length and content of the sentence. Certain words are keywords or not depends on whether the words can reveal the main meaning of the sentence or not.

### **2.1.3 Abstracting**

Compared with splitting and locating keywords, abstracting is more complicated which is the most important step in condensation. Abstracting mainly touches upon the essay structure, linking devices, syntax, tense, voice and diction. Based on the keywords in each sentence, the role each sentence plays in model essay is abstracted. Then the basic structure of the model essay can be abstracted. After that, the linking devices are to be decoded. The linking devices mainly involve repetition of keywords, conjunction and references. Conjunctions are usually classified as keywords because they play vitally important role in helping readers follow the author and better understand the content and logic of the model essay. Meanwhile, the repetition of keywords highlights the theme of the model essay. Besides, the demonstrative references and personal references are effective cohesive devices in organizing text. Then, the model essay is to be analyzed in terms of syntax. Grammatically, each sentence is analyzed whether it is a simple sentence, a coordinate sentence, a compound sentence, or a more complex coordinate compound sentence. Meanwhile, the interior structure of the sentence is analyzed, for example, the employment of appositive or non-predicate structure. Other special structures are not neglected, for example, the emphatic pattern. Next, tenses and voices of each sentence are analyzed. As is known to all, different tenses play different roles. A case in point is that simple present tense indicates objectiveness. And passive voice suggests objectiveness and vividness. Lastly, the diction of the model essay is analyzed. Attention is paid not only to advanced vocabulary but also to synonyms and so on.

## **2.2 Expansion**

The condensation is the process of decoding, while the expansion is encoding. Based on title and direction of writing assignment, the expansion consists of brainstorming, lexical clustering and extended writing. Integrating writing skills, the writing assignment can be accomplished.

Prior to expansion, the analysis of title and direction is essential, which produces an effect on the quality of writing assignment. Therefore, title and direction is analyzed firstly to determine the type of writing style.

### **2.2.1 Brainstorming**

The first step of expansion is brainstorming, which involves free association based on title and direction. And the result of brainstorming is the basis of lexical clustering and extended writing. During this session, the vocabulary occurred to the learner is supposed to be recorded promptly. Basically, brainstorming is achieved for one time; while a second time is required occasionally.

### **2.2.2 Lexical Clustering**

Some related vocabulary has been gained through brainstorming. And although these words are related, they are also disorganized. Therefore, the second step of expansion is lexical clustering, which is based on the correlation between words. When clustering vocabulary, it is also necessary to combine it with specific structural frameworks. After lexical clustering, the basic framework of the writing assignment is determined.

### **2.2.3 Extended Writing**

In the extended writing session, encoding is based on the result of lexical clustering. And it is also the very part that many learners find most difficult. Learners are supposed to compose sentences based on certain vocabulary. Firstly, the sentence structure is determined, which is the backbone of a sentence. Secondly, tense is determined based on the context. And finally modification is added. In this stage, as long as the learners combine relevant syntactic knowledge and practice more, they can achieve

satisfactory results.

After determining the sentence structure, tense and modification, learners also need to consider factors such as linking devices, voice, and diction comprehensively. In paragraphs, learners need to employ appropriate cohesive techniques to make the paragraph more logical. And the repetition of key vocabulary can highlight the theme of the writing assignment. In terms of sentence structure, in addition to the interspersed use of simple sentences with compound sentences, special sentence structures can also be used to enhance the vividness of the writing assignment.

### **2.3 Double Text AB**

The teaching model based on condensation-expansion and AB double texts of PAD Class involves at least four texts which are similar in types of writing. Two Text As are for teachers to demonstrate, and two Text Bs are for learners to practice.

#### **2.3.1 Text A**

In English Writing course, teachers need teaching materials demonstrate. In condensation, one Text A is needed; and in expansion, another text A is needed. But Text A is not used to cultivate ability but to demonstrate.

#### **2.3.2 Text B**

Likewise, in condensation, one Text B is needed; and in expansion, another text B is needed. Both Text Bs are used to cultivate the learners' ability. The assignment is assigned in groups or individuals based on the learners' ability.

## **3. Teaching Practice of English Writing Based on “Condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” of PAD Class**

English Writing Course aims at cultivating the learners' writing abilities, enhancing learners' cross-cultural communication skills and comprehensive cultural literacy, cultivating their autonomous learning and lifelong learning abilities, enabling them to effectively use English for communication in their studies, daily life, social interactions, and future work.

### **3.1 Objectives of English Writing Course**

English Writing is an optional course for non-English major students, which includes basic knowledge of English writing, writing skills, practical writing skills, and differences between English and Chinese. This course is based on the concept of “learner-centered” and the theoretical system of OBE. It adopts the teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class, utilizing modern information technology and learning management platforms. And it aims at cultivating learners' writing skills, promoting learners' English writing to be more in line with English expression habits and discourse principles and laying a preliminary foundation for learners for advanced English writing in order to meet the requirements of English writing in taking exams and in future work.

According to the matrix of optional courses for non-English majors, the objectives of English Writing are as follows:

**Knowledge objective:** master basic skills in English writing, including essay structure, linking devices, syntax, and diction and so on; master the formats and language expression norms of different literary styles; be capable of writing English short articles with complete structure, clear theme, appropriate vocabulary, and diverse cohesive devices based on stylistic features and basic language skills.

**Skill objective:** be capable of describing and explaining the structural features of English short articles based on condensation-expansion; be capable of applying specific essay structures to write clear and well supported paragraphs.

**Humanistic literacy:** have international vision, family and country feelings, cross-cultural communication ability, speculative ability, teamwork ability, independent learning and lifelong learning ability and other humanistic qualities.

The supporting relationship between the objectives of optional courses for non-English majors and the course objectives of English Writing is shown in Table 1.

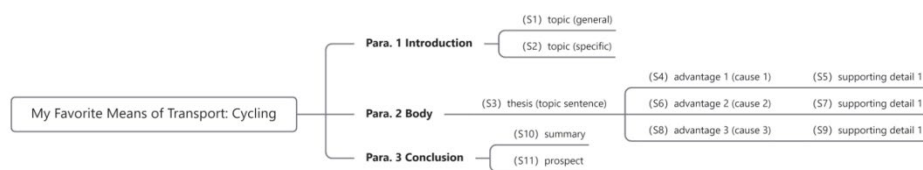
*Table 1: The supporting relationship between the objectives of optional courses for non-English majors and the course objectives of English Writing.*

Objectives of Optional Courses for Non-English Majors	Course Objectives
Be able to analyze the writing direction and conceive an article, plan a writing arrangement, draft an outline, write sentences and paragraphs, maintain consistency and coherence, apply writing styles, and modify articles in English writing.	Course Objective 1
Be able to use network resources, reference books, etc. to process general topic materials in different situations; be able to effectively describe, explain or elaborate, and express accurately, coherently, and appropriately.	Course Objective 2
Be able to use basic cross-cultural communication strategies for effective cross-cultural communication, serving the dissemination of Chinese culture to the outside world, while possessing teamwork, critical thinking, and continuous learning and development abilities.	Course Objective 3

### 3.2 Teaching Practice of English Writing Course

Before classroom teaching, preview is not encouraged so as to minimize the differences among learners. And the teaching implementation is generally divided into two parts: condensation and expansion. Each part follows the procedures of PAD Class.

In the presentation of condensation, the model essay, the first Text A, is distributed to the learners to go through in two minutes. Then the teachers demonstrate the process of decoding by splitting, locating keywords and abstracting. The structure of the essay is displayed on Mubu, an online tool of mind mapping (as seen in Figure 3); and other procedures are displayed on Word. While in the presentation of expansion, teachers demonstrate the process of encoding by brainstorming, lexical clustering and extended writing with the second Text A as reference. Brainstorming is displayed on Shimo, an online cooperative tool and Wordart, an online WordCloud generator; and other procedures are displayed on Word.



*Figure 3: Mind mapping of structure of model essay on Mubu.*

In the assimilation of condensation, the first Text B is assigned to learners as material to practice; while in the assimilation of expansion, the second Text B is assigned to learners as a writing task (as seen in Figure 2). Meanwhile, learners accomplish the task of “my favorites-test you-help me”, which serves as the “scaffold” of group discussion. The format of note-taking task is not strictly constrained.

In group discussion of both condensation and expansion, learners discuss the contents of “my favorites-test you-help me”, trying to solve problems encountered in the process of learning. While the problems could not be solved are answered by teachers in dialogue between teacher and learners.

### 3.3 Teaching Effects of English Writing Course

Under the condition that the final papers are of the same difficulty and the assessment methods are the same, the final scores of the five years are compared and analyzed. As shown in Table 2, adopting

the teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class can effectively improve the teaching of English writing and cultivate learners’ writing ability. Therefore, relatively satisfactory teaching results are gained.

*Table 2: 2018-2023 English Writing course results.*

Semester	Teaching model	Student number	Paper grading	Final grading
Autumn of 2018	Traditional	51	63.3	72.4
Autumn of 2019	C-E+AB PAD	39	68.3	75.4
Spring of 2020	C-E+AB PAD	52	69.0	72.8
Autumn of 2020	C-E+AB PAD	39	68.4	72.8
Spring of 2021	C-E+AB PAD	25	68.1	74.6
Spring of 2022	C-E+AB PAD	36	73.3	76.1
Spring of 2023	C-E+AB PAD	37	70.3	72.6

Data source: calculated based on final scores of English Writing from year 2018 to year 2023.

The teaching results pay more attention to the formative evaluation, and the involvement of learners’ classroom discussion, note-taking, “my favorites-test you-help me”, autonomous learning, assignment of condensation-expansion are included in the assessment. The final examination paper score accounts for 60%.

*Table 3: 2019-2023 English Writing course interview results.*

Learners	Interview Results	Course Objective
1	“Today’s method firstly determines the structure of The essay and then adds details, it can help me compose an essay efficiently and it is very practical.”	Course objective 1
2	“This method can enlarge my vocabulary, improve my grammar and cultivate my writing ability by analyzing The structure and contents.”	Course objective 1
3	“This method is easy to understand, and it is very fast to master. It is very different from the previous memorization of the essay. It is very helpful to improve the writing ability of English.”	Course objective 2
4	“Condensation and expansion writing is a good way to write a high quality article. This method allows us to condense the structure of the article, and then expand the structure of the vocabulary to write, enrich the whole article.”	Course objective 1
5	“Condensation and expansion are very helpful for elementary learners to master the structure and extend the content. Besides, it is very helpful in reading, which can help me grasp the key contents of reading.”	Course objective 2
6	“This method turns me from passive learner into active learner. I practiced my expressive ability in group discussion and deepened my understanding of knowledge. ”	Course objective 3

Data source: extracted based on the task of “my favorites-test you-help me” from students attending English Writing from year 2019 to year 2023.

As seen in Table 3, learners attending English Writing from year 2019 to year 2023 have been investigated. All the “my favorites-test you-help me” have been collected. The results of the “my favorites” show that the teaching model described in the study is conducive to the achievement of the course objectives.

The adoption of the teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class effectively improved the teaching quality of teachers and the learning effect of learners. At the same time, the learners’ self-learning ability, innovative, cooperative and critical thinking abilities have been comprehensively cultivated.

The adoption of the teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB Double Texts” based on PAD Class effectively stimulated the involvement of learners, and made the curriculum learning objectives and the objectives of optional courses for non-English majors organically unified. This teaching model can be used as a reference for teaching reform of other courses.

#### 4. Conclusion

The traditional teaching of English writing is mainly presented by teachers. The learners’ enthusiasm is frustrated, and the interaction between teachers and learners is not strong enough. Therefore, it is difficult to measure up to the expectation in the improvement of writing ability and the cultivation of core values. The “condensation-expansion” and “AB double Texts” based on PAD Class teaching model integrates the concepts of “learner-centered” and OBE, highlighting the real needs of learners. The teaching implementation is designed based on the training needs of learners’ practical knowledge, abilities and values. Meanwhile, diversified learning management systems are adopted to encourage learner’ involvement and stimulate learners’ learning interest and self-learning consciousness. Group discussion effectively cultivates learners’ cooperative and expressive abilities, and dialogue between learners and teachers cultivates learners’ critical thinking abilities. As a teaching method, PAD Class provides teachers with a new teaching idea[8].

The study puts forward and practices the teaching model of “condensation-expansion” and “AB double Texts” based on PAD Class in English writing, taking the lead in applying this method to the practices of college English teaching. In this way, it revolutionized the traditional teaching method of English writing in college English.

With recent four-year’s teaching experience and three-year’s results of implementing the teaching model, findings show that the model can effectively improve the teaching of English writing and the learners’ writing abilities. And it cultivates the learners’ cooperative and expressive abilities, which are indispensable for the needs of society [9]. Therefore, this teaching model is worthy of further testing and spreading as it may be suitable to the teaching of other skills of English in Chinese universities[10].

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